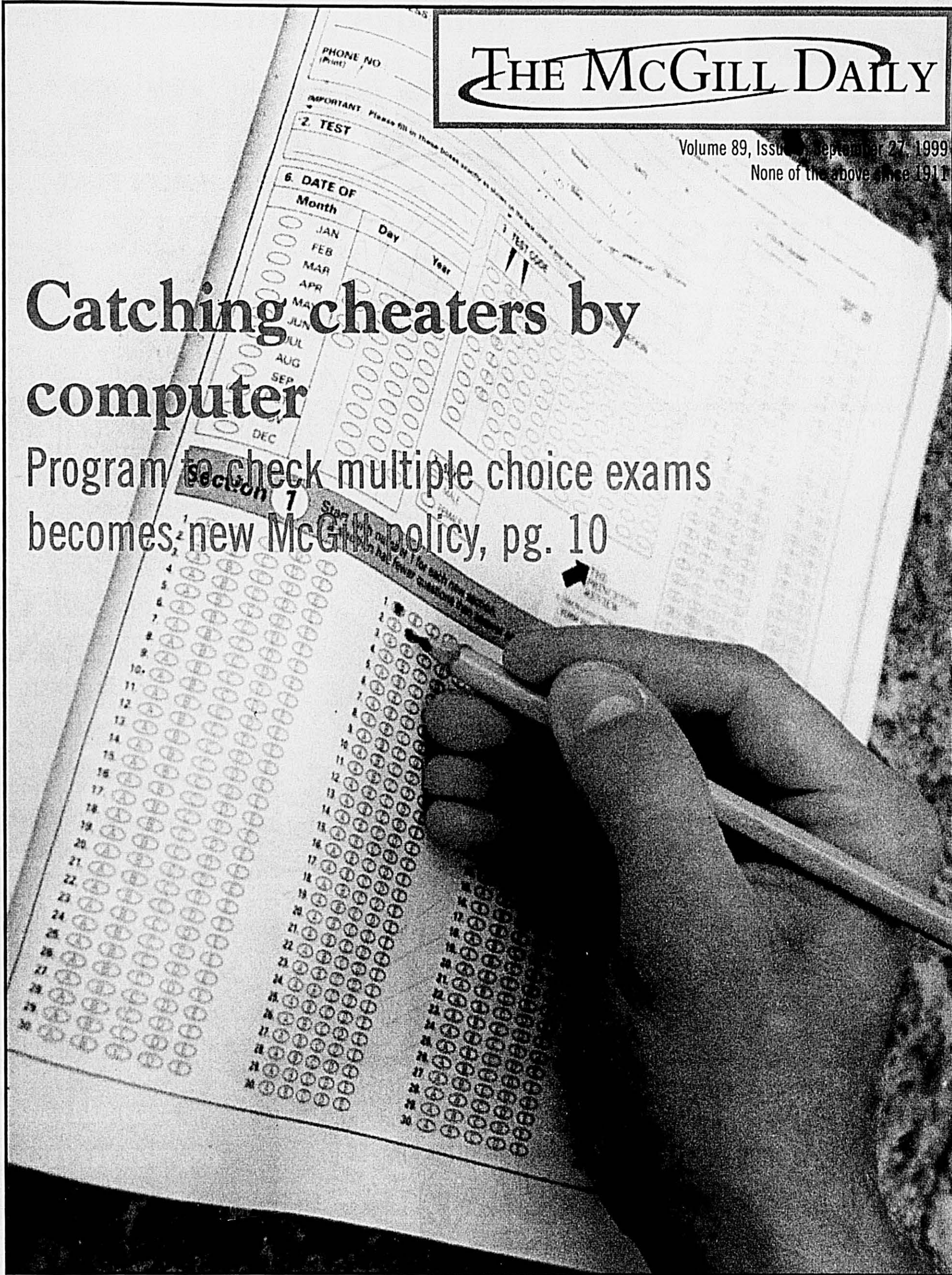




THE MCGILL DAILY

Volume 89, Issue 39, September 27, 1999
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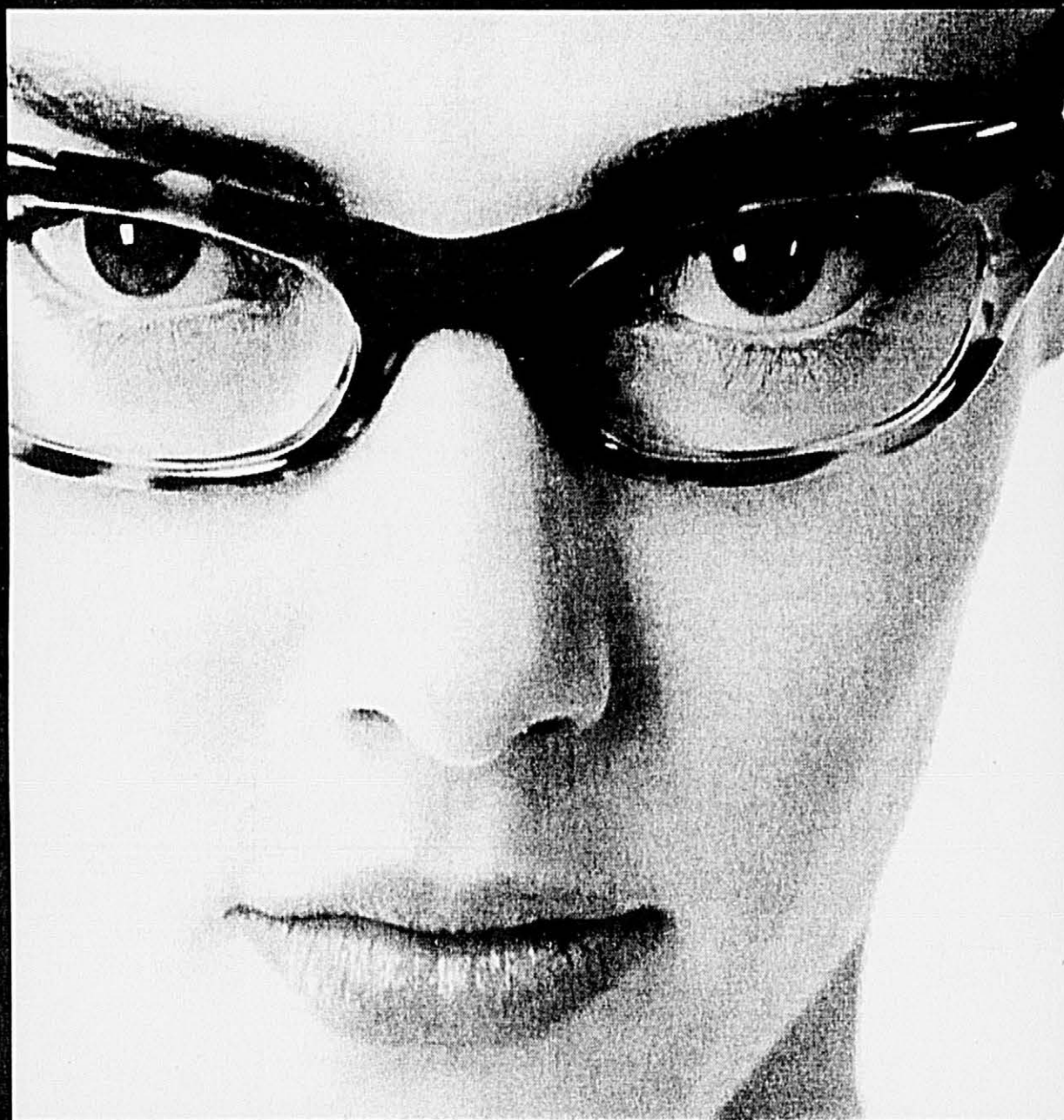
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SSMU VP's Girlfriend Appointed to Contested Senate Seat

Student Leaders Scream Abuse of Power

BY JON BRICKER

A decision by student Senate Caucus to appoint the girlfriend of the SSMU VP who heads their committee has outraged student leaders who charge that the appointment is a conflict of interest.

Vice-President University and Academic Affairs Xavier Van Chau came under fire at Thursday's SSMU meeting when SSMU Arts Representative Chase Robinson stood up and attacked the appointment of Clara Péron, Van Chau's girlfriend, to the vacant Arts Senator seat. Péron was named as the new senator this week following an interview process for all candidates by the Senate Caucus, which Van Chau leads.

"I was wondering, if I was your boyfriend, could I be the Arts Senator?" Robinson asked. The brewing battle was cut short before Van Chau could respond, but several student leaders voiced their anger with Péron's appointment following the meeting.

But Van Chau defended his stake in the appointment as acceptable. "I made it quite clear that there was a conflict of interest," he said. "There wasn't any lesser role I could have taken." He also noted that although he coordinated the applications and was part of the Senate Caucus, that he abstained from discussion and voting on the candidates.

"The decisions made were not influenced by him at all," Péron said. "I had already done a lot of work. I think that may be why they chose me."

But last week did not mark the first time that Van Chau had heard complaints about the appointment of Senators. A proposal brought to light three weeks ago met debate from student leaders and an anonymous letter circulated to student leaders.

"The SSMU intends to take over the appointment of students' representatives to the university Senate in order to have complete control over them and their views," read the letter.

It was in response to Van Chau's Senate Caucus reform proposal that featured a

call to give his University Affairs Committee the authority to appoint student Senators, seats that have been determined for years in campus-wide elections.

Van Chau eliminated the appointment idea from his proposal after it met a less than positive response from the Caucus.

But the issue came up again at an SSMU meeting two weeks ago as he called on the SSMU to show support for appointing a Senator to fill the post left vacant by Sarah Clarke. SSMU by-laws already call for appointments instead of by-elections whenever Senators resign during their terms.

And Van Chau defended the appointment process this time around, calling his actions legal under the by-laws. "I opened the position and I contacted all of the people who could run for it."

The Senate Caucus received six applications this time around, though only three met the requirements that applicants be elected AUS members or committee members. Péron beat out Jeff Roberts and Catherine Weiler to win the post.

Fred Sagel, who ran for the position in the spring elections says he also expressed interest in the position to Van Chau, and felt that he was given less than due consideration. While he didn't meet the requirement of holding a position currently, Sagel said more could have been done to open the field to a wider range of candidates. Van Chau told him that the SSMU had the power to override the requirement in opening the nomination process.

Daniel Artenosi, President of the Arts Undergraduate Society, also spoke out against the nomination process.

"I was kind of left out of the process," he said. "My concern is that I was never given active consideration."

"I sincerely hope that patronage wasn't involved," said Sagel, though adding that Péron could very well be the best person for the position.

"I don't doubt that Xavier followed procedures," said Artenosi, who is also Van



Van Chau

Chau's roommate, "but I have a problem with the by-laws."

"Xavier and I have had confrontations and discussions about this in the past," Artenosi said. "AUS was not even invited to the selection committee. But Arts is certainly the best group to represent Arts students."

Robinson's ire was obvious at Thursday's meeting when he rose to question the appointment's legitimacy.

"He was out of line," said Van Chau. "Had he looked into the process, he would have known what the by-laws said," added Van Chau.

"It's trying to damage Clara's image as an elected official," Van Chau went on to defend Péron's qualifications, saying she was a good choice.

"A lot of individuals are really happy with the appointment. She's very bright, but that's easy for me to say," he said.

Péron was also optimistic and said she brings a lot of experience and determination to the Senate Caucus.

"My platform was based on communication," she said, listing course evaluations and student awareness of Senate issues as part of her mandate. "Considering the climate now at McGill, these are things that can stand to be done."

"And if ever I feel that the fact that I'm Xavier's girlfriend would interfere with the Senate Caucus, I would resign," added Péron.

Mike Gohlfeld/courtesy of The McGill Tribune



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From The Archives

10 years ago: On September 26, 1989, The Daily's Carl Wilson interviewed Michael Moore about his new film Roger and Me. Moore told the Daily that the trend towards massive layoffs by corporations earning record profits "isn't just going on in Flint, Michigan. All over North America, companies are pitting worker against worker with threats of layoffs — especially in the 'international' market — which is always good for the corporation."

25 years ago: On September 26, 1974, Philosophy Professor Bruce Garside wrote a letter to The Daily explaining how his support of the gay liberation movement cost

him his job. "[T]he gay person who comes out at McGill is not even assured a minimal tolerance...Not too long ago a faculty member was summarily dismissed when a gay-related offence became known; likewise, a student was turned down by the Department of Immigration after his academic advisor informed them he was a homosexual. In spite of my general disaffection with academic philosophy as exhibited at McGill, I don't think my position would have been in jeopardy if it had not been for my involvement with gay liberation."

50 years ago: On September 30, 1949,

The Daily reported that a University of Toronto student had been mistakenly detained by U.S. immigration on suspicion of being a Communist. "The co-ed, Ruth Comfort, daughter of Charles C. Comfort, Canadian artist, was detained 'as the result of a most regrettable and unfortunate mistake,' U.S. officials acknowledged. Miss Comfort was returning from Holland with a group of Canadian students including Geoffrey Pearson, son of Lester B. Pearson, Minister of External Affairs, aboard the Dutch steamer Volendam when taken into custody and accused of making an 'inflammatory' pro-Communist speech aboard the ship."

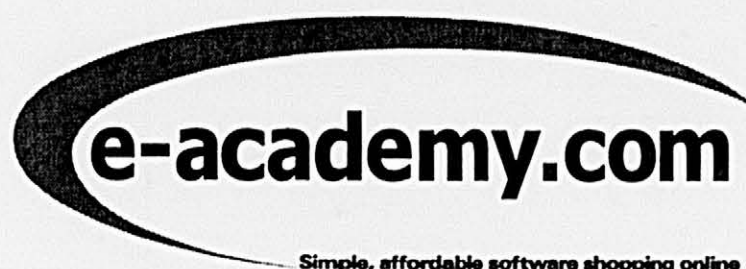
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A debate on differential tuition between the editors of Le Débit and The Daily

Une Nécessité!

BY JULIEN LAPLANTE

TRANSLATION BY JAMES YAP

It was recently decided that Canadian students from outside of Quebec would have to pay even more this year to study in Quebec. In order to study in the province with the lowest tuition fees in Canada, out-of-province Canadians will have to shell out \$3438.30, an increase of 10% over last year, which in turn had seen a fee increase of 8.5% over the previous year. It is a turn of events which has not been well received by the large percentage of McGill students who are Canadians from outside Quebec.

Who likes paying more than someone else for the same services? Quebec students will have to pay \$1668.30 for the privilege to study at McGill University, a substantial difference of 106%.

The SSMU, which in this case has taken the side of out-of-province students, asserts that it is unjust for these Canadians to pay more for their education than their fellow citizens from Quebec. However, after taking certain basic facts into account, one quickly realizes that their position just doesn't

hold water.

In life, no one gets something for nothing. In Quebec, not only does the province charge the lowest tuition fees in Canada, but it also levies the highest taxes. Higher taxes are what generate more government services, if one is to treat university education as a "service."

Would it therefore be more equitable to grant equal access to government services to someone who has never paid taxes in this province? If these out-of-province stu-

dents paid the same fees as their Quebec counterparts, that would be analogous to two consumers buying the same "product" (post-secondary education), with one of them paying less, with no good reason but that he or she is Canadian. Does simply being Canadian give one the right to pay less than a tax-paying Quebecer?

At first glance, it would appear that out-of-province Canadians, by paying 106% more for their education, are partially financing the education of

their Quebec counterparts. This is, however, naught but an illusion; in reality, it is the absence of differential tuition fees which would imperil the lowest tuition fees in Canada by allowing 20% of McGill students to study without paying for the real value of what they are obtaining. The subsequent burden placed on a rapidly diminishing budget would effect a rise in tuition fees for all students.

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Differential Tuition Fees Suck

BY JASON CHOW

While it is commendable that the provincial government is keeping tuition fees in check, its measures in doing so are not. Simply, differential tuition fees are a savvy political move by the PQs and at the same time, deny out-of-province students of their rights. Differential tuition fees are discriminatory. Your province of origin determines how much in tuition you pay.

The new fees are setting a new precedent: not only is there citizenship based on national boundaries, but based on provincial ones too. Higher fees that separate the students lead to another unnecessary boundary. Students born in Saskatchewan and students in Quebec are citizens of the same country. Such a precedent has never

been set and why should it? To hinder other students from across the country to study in Quebec? To discourage a diverse and vibrant student body that comes from all-provinces?

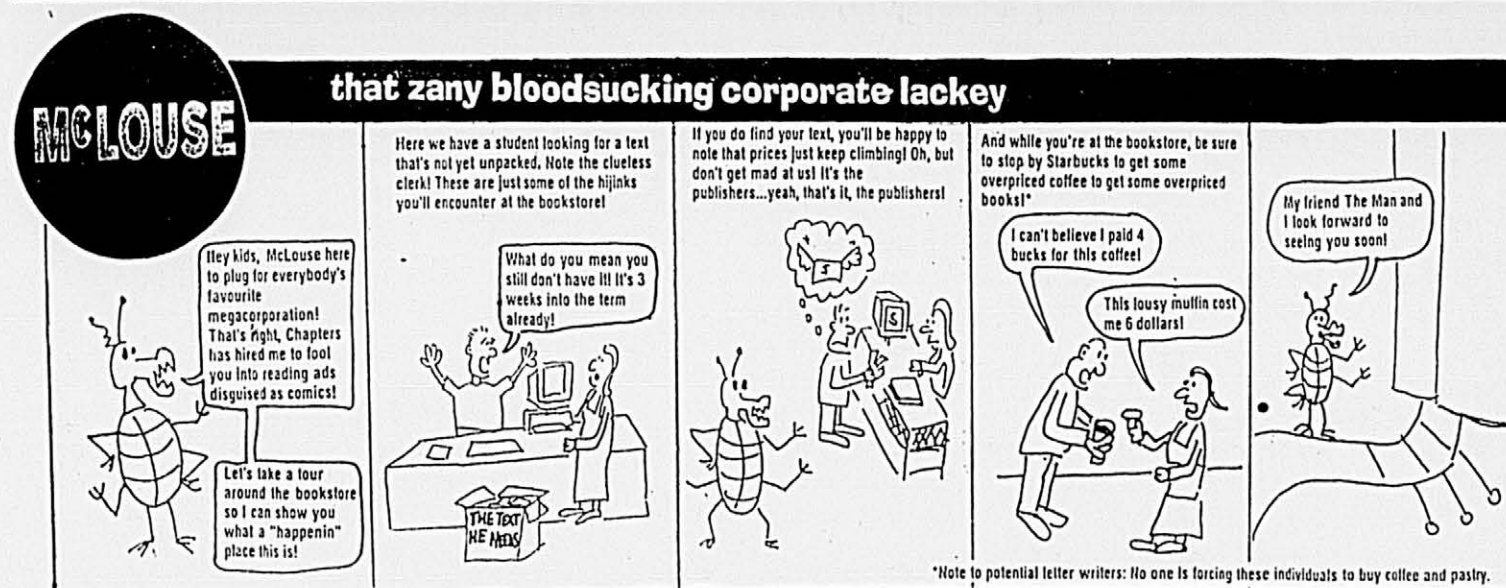
Some have argued that differential fees are a way of keeping Quebec tax dollars for the Quebec students and not to subsidize an Ontario student. However, one must also take in account federal transfer payments. Quebec will receive \$4.64 billion dollars in equalization payments from the federal government during the 1999-00 fiscal year. Equalization payments are transfers from the wealthier provinces to the less well-to-do ones. So Quebec education is not solely subsidized by Quebec tax dollars, but also

by the tax dollars of all within Canada. The differential fee has been raised to the Canadian average. Sure, many out-of-province McGillers would pay the same rates or maybe more if they studied in their home province. However, the problem lies in the selection of who pays the higher fees. Differential fees are only applicable to Canadians.

Students from countries within the Francophonie (France, Algeria, Vietnam, and Togo, to name a few) are eligible to pay the lower Quebec fees. Differential fees are highly selective. Why should a foreigner, who pays nothing into the Canadian social system, get to receive the benefits of lower tuition?

Essentially, if you speak French, no matter what part of the world you're from, you may pay the cheaper rate. But, if you're from English Canada, too bad? Pay up. What this all adds up to is savvy political move. To cover for some of the costs of higher education during a period of fiscal austerity without alienating the Quebec youth, the PQ government has made out-of-province students open their pocket books. If you're a Quebec student, you have a sweet deal. The PQs want you to vote for them. They gave you cheap tuition, so why shouldn't you choose Bouchard on your ballot box again?

Op-Art



Op-art is space devoted to editorial cartoons every Monday in the Daily. Submissions are welcomed in Shatner B-03.

McGill Prof Wins World Habitat Award

Prof. Avi Friedman recognized for his work on The Grow Home.

BY JASON CHOW

It is often said that the insular nature of the ivory tower makes professors irrelevant to the "real world." This is why professors are more than ecstatic when their work is recognized as making a contribution to society.

"I'm amazingly excited," said Professor Avi Friedman who will be given the World Habitat Award next week in Dalian, China for his work on the innovative Grow Home. Friedman is on faculty at the McGill School of Architecture and is also the director of the school's Affordable Homes Program.

"You work in a university. You work in a small domain. You don't feel like your work is recognized. Then one day, someone

comes and recognizes you. I'm thrilled."

The Grow Home, Friedman's brainchild, is a two-storey unit with an optional basement and is constructed as part of an affordable townhouse complex of similar homes. The cost price of the housing units are kept low by having them built in a row and also by allocating a portion of the house to be unfinished. Friedman estimated that the undeveloped basement saves \$5000 and allows families to finish their homes on their own at their discretion.

The name "Grow Home" is derived from the design. "You grow your home within the perimeter," explained Friedman. "You start with a portion of your space unpartitioned and you expand."

Over 10,000 families in North America are owners of a Grow Home. During his sabbatical year in 1997, Friedman brought his project to Guadalajara, Mexico. His idea has also received positive response in the Czech Republic.

While the average cost of a home in Montreal is \$75,000, the Grow Home can be sold for as little as \$40,000. Friedman said that they intended to design homes for low-income families who earn \$25,000 or less.

"It was designed for people who would otherwise be renters," said Friedman.



"We'd like to give them an opportunity to have a first crack to be a homeowner."

The World Habitat Award was initiated in 1985 as part of the contribution of the Building and Social Housing Foundation (BHSF) to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987. The awards are meant to identify innovative and successful human settlement projects throughout the world which could be replicated elsewhere. Each year, the UN and the BHSF select two initiatives. A different city is chosen to host the ceremony. And this year, Friedman will be receiving the award from the Chinese Ministers of Construction in Dalian, China.

David Covo, head of the School of

Architecture, commended Friedman and added that international awards boost the McGill image as a research institution.

"Our teaching and research activities provide the context for such innovative projects as The Grow Home, and the international recognition associated with the World Habitat Award will add lustre to our reputation, building even more international links," noted Covo in a press release.

The award also gives \$24,000 to the recipient provided that three-quarters of the money be spent on promoting the concept.

"It's not sexy... I'm just doing homes," said Friedman. "It's beautiful that someone recognizes those doing work for the needs of the poor."

An Activist's Lesson

Z Magazine's Michael Albert on the participative economy, per-capita activism, and the futility of education.x

BY DAVID PODGORSKI

You may be surprised to learn that the world is a terrible place. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, politics are a diversion, and we're all stuck in dead-end jobs, too afraid of losing them to ask for a raise.

Michael Albert has many familiar statistics to justify this. He cites figures proving that the top one percent of the population in the U.S. makes as much money as the bottom ninety-five percent, that an American CEO typically earns 209 times as much money as one of his workers, that the Fortune 500 has money equivalent to the entire GNP of China.

The problem, as Albert sees it, is not one of elections and political leaders, but of institutions. Simply put, our concept of the marketplace is so engrained in our culture that we lack the will to change it. Or as Albert defines it, our political structures "breed certain types of behaviour and outcomes."

Our economic structures are a problem too, Albert believes, explaining the basics of economics and society; that in any economy there is a distribution of income and some people get more than others. More important for him is "what affects the power... what decides who gets [their appropriate share]". As he points out, some jobs, such as those with comfortable work environments, the ability to use one's mind and not exhaust one's body, and the making of important decisions have an empowering quality above that of so-called "shitwork." This, Albert says, is a direct result of competition as it currently exists in the marketplace. Competition as we know it makes it necessary for any corporation to seek out the maximizing of revenues in order to succeed.

Albert also highlights a further problem; the possibility for change has been almost eliminated by a wealthy elite committed to protecting their own share of the economy. Many of the economic problems we see actually work in favour of conservative business interests. High unemployment and cuts to welfare are a threat to working Canadians everywhere because they reduce an employee's bargaining power — an employee in times of high unemployment is easily replaced, and one unable to live on welfare will face more pressure to keep a job. Government revenue

diverted from social programs into defense spending and tax cuts is a direct attack on the ability of ordinary Canadians to empower themselves in such programs as public health and education. Even the education we do receive is insignificant. Students with sufficient education can expect jobs after graduation will be rewarded with a comfortable living wage, but according to Albert, "the overwhelming majority of students are trained to be drudges." The elitist education is one in which the protégé is taught to run the show.

Albert's solution to this is to empower us in the workplace. None of us currently have any say in what we do in our working lives, and Albert's answer is to reject top-down management in favour of what he calls a "participative economy." Participative companies, as exemplified by such organizations as his own Z Magazine, are businesses which are not characterized by private ownership, but remove the issue by functioning in a collective fashion. Employees and managers share duties, from decision-making to sweeping the floors, and everyone is paid according to individual contribution as well as sacrifices made on the job, such as unpleasant or hazardous tasks.

Michael Albert's ideas seem like excellent solutions to the problems we face, but he has faced criticism for proposing ideas which involve changing a whole society, something which leaves ordinary citizens feeling powerless. Albert rebuffs this with a concept he calls "Per-Capita Activism", a solution meant to inspire activists rather than leave them feeling despondent. Per-Capita Activism is the idea that one person trying to influence social change is worth more as an individual and will have more of a voice than one person in a million trying to accomplish the same goal. One of the mistakes people make, says Albert is trying to make leftist politics and activism an elitist pursuit. He advocates a grassroots orientation to movements, putting public-interest groups in touch with people they supposed to represent instead of alienating them. Anyone dissatisfied with society should take comfort in Albert's advice, "Don't try to do the most important thing there is to do. Do the most important thing you can do."

BRIEFS

Francophone Facilitator Approved

With the help of this year's SSMU executive and Francophone Commissioner, the administration has decided to hire a Francophone Student Facilitator to speak to the needs of the frequently overlooked French-speaking population on campus. Following a story in last Thursday's Daily, McGill Principal Bernard Shapiro met with the university's Vice-Principals and agreed to go ahead with the new portfolio.

SSMU President Andrew Tischler declared at Thursday's council meeting that "there has been great progress on francophone issues on campus." It is hoped that the new position will help connect McGill's francophone students with the administration, and improve communication between French students and the rest of the university.

This full-time post will address issues such as improving counseling services for students out of CEGEP, as well as helping with their transition into university. The facilitator will also participate in the organization of various events such as August orientation and frosh.

-Samira Rabmani

Shapiro Presents Discussion Paper to Senate

A McGill administration project with a strangely research-centred, techno-friendly, and corporate-involving flavour reared its head at last Wednesday's Senate meeting.

The document entitled "Tradition

and Innovation: An International University in a City of Knowledge" marks a response to Education Minister François Legault's call for discussion papers on universities' funding needs and spending focuses.

"If the government does reinvest in the Quebec university network, McGill is ready with exciting proposals offering new ideas for a new era," said Principal Shapiro.

Included in the document's nine academic priorities are increasing outside research funding, promoting internships with industry, and raising support for technology across undergraduate programs. It also details objectives for new labs and drug design programs.

Shapiro also said that for McGill to make gains in these areas, reinvestment from Quebec to the tune of at least \$4,000 more per student was imperative.

"We hope our discussion paper will stimulate further debate, reflection, and in the end, new possibilities for Quebec universities and our society," said Principal Shapiro.

-Jon Bricker

SSMU Unloads Opt-outs

Several students who called the Student Society inquiring about the procedure to opt out of the McGill Student Fund were allegedly told to call the Daily last Friday. It is believed that this is due to the Daily's coverage of the opt-out period last Monday.

"It's really irresponsible of them to do that," said Daily Coordinating Editor Jason Chow. "If the opt-out's to be done in good faith, the SSMU must help students rather than send them

elsewhere."

The call from students came in the midst of long line-ups in front of SSMU's Shatner building desks. Beginning Wednesday, students taking advantage of the opt-out were greeted at the desk with literature explaining why they shouldn't opt-out.

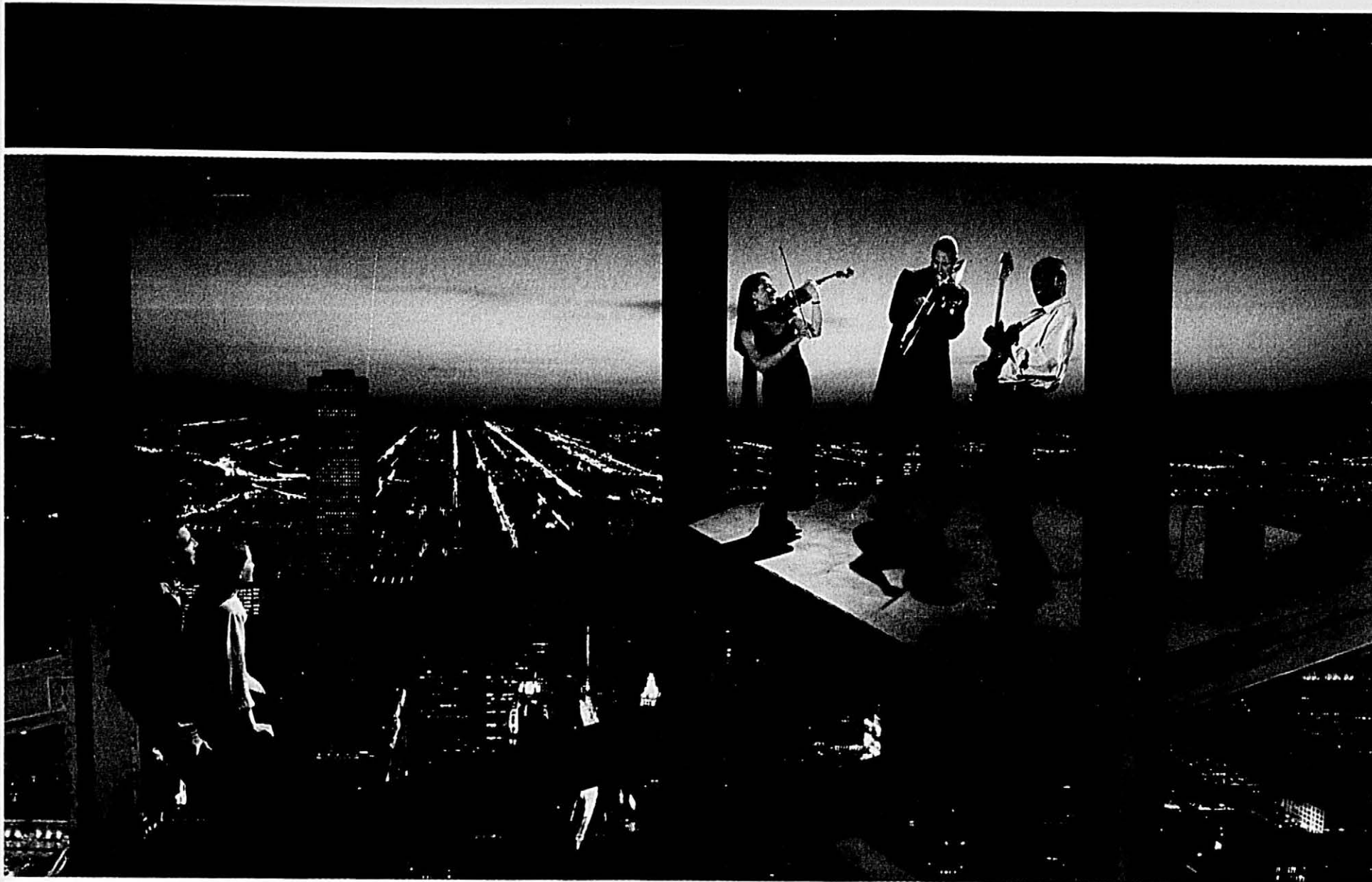
The opt-out period, originally scheduled to run until next week, has also been shortened. Students choosing to opt-out can have their accounts credited to the tune of \$76 until this Wednesday.

-James Yap

Bernard Landry coming to McGill?

Plans are under way to bring Quebec politicians from all sides of the political spectrum to McGill University, including a possible visit by Finance Minister Bernard Landry next month. Questions were raised at Thursday's SSMU meeting about whether SSMU was arranging to bring Lucien Bouchard, or any other members of the PQ government, to the university. The questions were in response to tomorrow's visit by Jean Charest, leader of the Official Opposition. SSMU is splitting Charest's time with the administration. President Tischler said, "We're interested in having as many people as possible from the PQ to speak to McGill." He further acknowledged the importance of speaking "not just [to] one party," but to as many people as possible. Besides Landry, Minister of Education François Legault was mentioned as a potential visitor.

-Samira Rabmani



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RVC Makes its Mark

McGill celebrates a century of women's presence on campus

BY DANIELLE HOFFMAN

After being a fan of the TV show *Felicity* during my last year of high school, I sent in my application for McGill residences with visions of sweet Noel and Ben lookalikes living right next door. So you can imagine my dismay when I discovered that I had been assigned to a room in Royal Victoria College, sometimes affectionately dubbed "the nunnery." In the 70s, black graffiti on the wall of the Roscoe

letter detailing how Donald Smith had given his endowment for the express purpose of separate classes for women. He further expressed his own views that if McGill "had entered on the work of 'co-education,' it would scarcely have been possible to avoid a complete breakdown of its success and usefulness."

After a year or so of furious letter-writing and name-calling, the Board of Governors simply required Murray to

McGill men were enlisted, and women quickly outnumbered men in the Faculty of Arts. Through necessity, the old prohibitions against co-education broke down, and teaching at RVC was reduced.

POST-WAR POLITICS

Yet once the war had ended and the men had returned, a new argument sur-

dents to form two separate classes. In 1930, official policy finally declared McGill University a co-educational school. By 1940 the only classes left at RVC were first year English, French, and Physical Education, and after a few more years, these classes had disappeared. RVC was no longer a girls' college, but a residence.

In 1971, the Faculty of Music was given most of the original RVC building and the Reynold's Wing, and RVC itself consisted of the Roscoe and West Wings. Donna Runnells, the Warden during the 1970's, created the roles of Assistant Warden, and resident assistants, or "dons." Their duties were much the same as today: they welcomed new students, discussed personal and academic problems, and organized functions like holiday parties and professor-student dinners.

RVC has, however, changed a great deal over the years. In the early 1900's, students were rather pampered: their rooms were cared for, beds were made, and waitresses brought them coffee after dinner, in addition to milk and biscuits in the evening and tea at midday. The RVC handbook in the early 1960's advised the women to pay attention to their responsibilities including "honest and consistent application to your academic work, the observance of all College and Student Government regulations, and the maintenance of high standards of personal conduct so as to uphold both your own good name and that of the college." In marked contrast was the handbook of the late 1970's, which read: "What 'rules and regulations' do exist are mainly decided on and administered by the students them-

complaints regarding the foods' taste and the lack of variety.

PRESENT-DAY RVC

The RVC residence also costs about \$200 more per month than Upper Residences, for little more than meals on weekends and added security. Another common complaint is the distance from the other dormitories, and the absence of men; although, as Sarah from Arts put it: "I'm not dying from lack of male contact."

A surprising number of RVC residents chose to come here. Florence Tracy, the current Warden of RVC (as well as Director of Residences), asserted her belief that an all-girls residence is a necessary part of McGill. Girls from other cultures, she explained, often feel more comfortable in an all-girl environment.

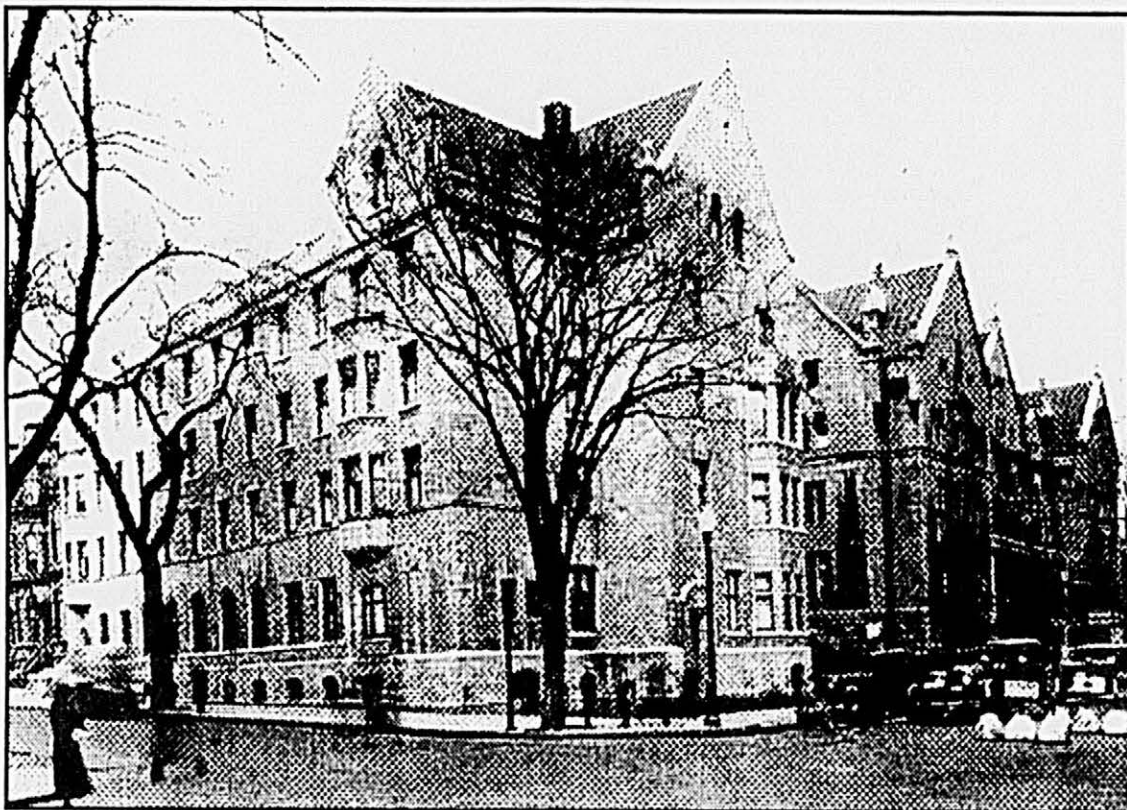
Yasmine and Deema, two Jordanian students who are studying management, agreed. They came from a different culture and different life, and liked the environment at RVC. Sarah, an engineering student, said that she thought RVC was "the most secure and easiest place for my first year," and Zane, a Physical and Health Education student, listed location, same-sex bathrooms, safety, linen services, study rooms, and counselors as all reasons that she chose to live at RVC.

After one hundred years of varied and colourful history, RVC executives have planned numerous centennial celebrations. A Speaker Series with prominent women of today, a spring concert for female Canadian composers, a women's job fair, and an RVC Memorabilia auction are all planned.

Mona Shair (the current President of RVC as well as a member of the Inter-Residence Council) also detailed other coming events: hiking, clubbing, and opera trips; Halloween and Valentines Day parties and contests; a wine and cheese party, and a trip to Quebec City. A big event is in the planning stages: the Millennium

Centenary Jubilee, celebrating the millennium, the centenary of RVC, and the twenty years Flo Tracy has been serving as Warden. Since assuming her presidency, Mona has also initiated other changes in the RVC council, introducing various subcommittees: sports, environment, food, and women's issues.

Mona expressed her own liking for RVC: the chances to make lasting friends with women from diverse cultures and backgrounds and the appeal for international students who are from more traditional backgrounds. Many would agree with Mona that "McGill has more to offer through RVC."



View of RVC and West Wing Extension, ca 1933

Wing declared "RVC—Royal Virginité College," and when asked whether she had wanted to live in RVC, Kirsten, a first-year Arts student, responded, "No. Did anyone?"

Yet a hundred years ago, before the building of RVC, this certainly was not the case. Women were very eager to have their own home at McGill. They first began to take classes at McGill University in 1871, through the newly formed "Ladies' Educational Association of Montreal." By 1884, with a generous and unexpected donation of \$50,000 from Sir Donald Smith (later Lord Strathcona) women were permitted to earn a Bachelor of Arts. Yet their classes were still strictly all-women, special lectures led by either the usual instructors or special ones brought in by the LEAM.

A heated debate arose over the issue. J. Clark Murray, a prominent professor at McGill, wrote to the *Montreal Daily Witness* in 1888: "In spite of the success which has attended co-education wherever it has been tried, the college has inflicted on its professors the cruel injustice of requiring them to go through this needless farce...of repeating their lectures every day."

The principal at the time, Sir William Dawson, responded with a carefully written

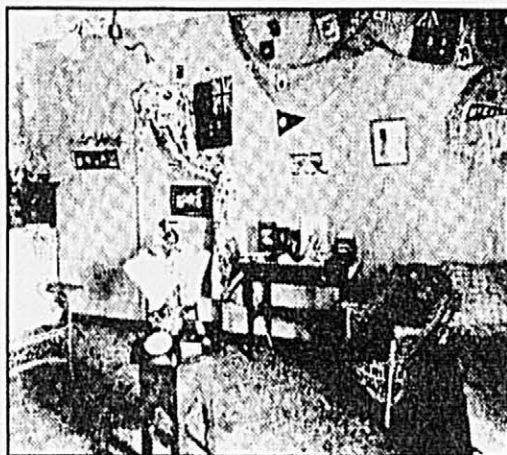
respect the University regulations, and the debate faded-not to be resumed for another thirty years. Instead, plans were put in motion for the building of Royal Victoria College, and Donald Smith assured the women students of 1889 that "they [would] have a habitat of their own." Of course, it took longer than two years to build the institution, but by 1899 the hall was ready for occupancy.

Royal Victoria College was considered luxurious for its time. It had its own library, assembly hall, gymnasium with

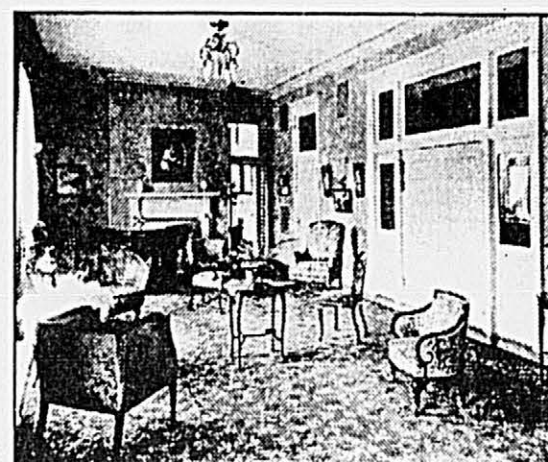
faced, taking place within the hallowed pages of the *McGill Daily*: whether or not RVC women were truly students of McGill University. Bemoaning the equal status with men that women enjoyed, though they maintained their own organizations, an editorial in 1928 said: "Due to a ruling by a grand benefactor of McGill [James McGill] there is no place for women in McGill college. Hence they have no status as members of the University but are affiliated with it in the institution of the RVC." Furious, the Warden of that period, Susan Cameron Vaughn, responded with a heated letter in which she explained that though there was indeed no mention of women in James McGill's will, the almost equally important Lord Strathcona had approached the issue. More importantly, RVC women had been receiving official McGill degrees since 1888.

By 1930, with the issue still a sensitive subject, Vaughn took the *McGill Daily* letters and copies of relevant wills and statutes to a prominent Montreal lawyer, who decided that "the Royal Victoria College is made and declared to be a college of McGill University, not an affiliated college...its students are members of the University."

Scarcely had this issue been settled when the question of co-education arose once again. This time, it was easily resolved; ever since the outbreak of World War II, women had been joining men's classes, usually because there were not enough stu-



Student's bedroom, interior RVC



First-floor parlour, RVC, ca 1903

themselves. Basically, living together in any community requires just a single rule: respect for the rights of others." This year's handbook reasserts the idea that "RESPECT is the number one rule in McGill Residences," but sets a few specifics about sound equipment, furniture, and pets.

Attitudes about RVC, however, have not changed as much as you might think. One of the main complaints most RVC residents have is about the food. In 1922, Beatrice Johnson recalled, "all institution inmates complain of food, ...the food was inferior." Today many students concur and during any given meal one can hear the consistent

Canada's Most Neglected

Government finally to protect endangered wildlife

BY JACQUES DU BINSKY

Two hundred Canadians rallied outside the Château Frontenac in Québec City last Tuesday in support of stiff pan-governmental legislation to protect Canada's endangered species. In a unique and touching show of solidarity, they included 160 from Montréal and 40 from the Montagnais Nation.

"We're all here to say, as strongly as we can, enough with the talk, enough with the empty promises, enough with the inaction," declared Dr. Rick Smith, Canadian Director of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the group that organised the rally. "Canadians are tired of waiting. We want endangered species protected by a law with teeth."

The wait has indeed been a long one. Both the United States and Mexico have such laws. Despite widespread popular support of ninety-two percent in a Pollara/IFAW national poll, Canada has none.

Canada signed the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, but the federal and provincial governments remained inactive until 1996, when government ministers agreed in principle to a National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada. So far, not one province has fulfilled the Accord, and five - as well as the federal government - have yet to pass any legislation at all.

Since signing the Accord, the lone legislative attempt by the federal government was the highly criticised Bill C-65 introduced in 1996. Environmentalists opposed the bill's weak safeguards and failure to sufficiently preserve habitats and species concurrently. The bill died on the order paper when the 1997 election was called.

"Canada is one of the few western nations to have no federal legislation to

"There's only a few provinces that even have something called an endangered species act. Up until this year the Québec act was among the best of the bunch."

"What happened this past year is that the government of Québec watered down its own endangered species act so that the habitat protection for endangered species is no longer mandatory. So we have this ridiculous situation where the copper red horse, which is a fish that is found in the Richelieu river and is found nowhere else in the world, is officially listed as critically endangered in Québec, but the river that it lives in is totally unprotected."

The best solution would be for each province to defend endangered species to the limit of its jurisdiction, with federal law acting as a safety net in case provinces don't toe the line, Smith opined.

Recently-appointed federal Environment Minister David Anderson appears to favour such a strong approach. He even elaborated the possibility that the Criminal Code be invoked in extreme cases. But IFAW cautions that current legislative proposals must also fulfill the commitment of the National Accord to preserve wildlife habitats.

"If you cut down a forest or if you allow clear-cutting in spaces or geographical regions where there are endangered species, these species could very well go extinct," said Seidle. While the preceding environment minister had little concern for this, Seidle commented that Anderson seems committed to legal provisions barring the destruction of wilderness areas. This is responsible for eighty percent of the endangered species problem, said Seidle.

"The bottom line is that if you don't protect spaces, we're going to lose species," stated Seidle. "Hopefully the federal government and the provinces are waking up to this fact."

The National Accord also called for "an independent process for assessing the status of species at risk." At the moment, this is conducted by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), a body made up of government and independent scientists, as well as representatives of government and non-government wildlife bodies.

But COSEWIC's assessments might not be made legally binding. Instead, it is proposed that a council composed of the provincial, territorial, and federal wildlife ministers, and possibly industry scientists, [choose] which COSEWIC-designated endangered species to protect. Seidle is vehemently opposed to the idea.

"Politics should have nothing to do with it, it shouldn't enter into it at all. It should be a requirement that any species which the scientists determine to be at risk should receive automatic legal protection under federal and provincial legislation," he stated. "In terms of the protection of endangered species, it's too critical now. You have endangered and then you have extinct, and there's very little room for error."

The federal government's long-awaited initiative will hopefully ensure that Canadians never experience an "error".

In April, COSEWIC declared two more species of Stickleback fish to be extinct, bringing the total number of uniquely Canadian species that have disappeared forever to twelve. Moreover, three additional species were classified as extirpated, meaning that they no longer exist in the Canadian wild.

There are presently 86 species of wildlife — up from 73 last year — classified as endangered in Canada which means that their populations face imminent extirpation or extinction. They range from the Acadian Whitefish to the Spotted Wintergreen. Here is a sample

American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) — The ginseng is threatened by forest clearing, urban development and over-harvesting. While Quebec no longer permits the Ginseng to be exported, Ontario allows the commercial exploitation of this endangered species to continue.

Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*) — The St. Lawrence (numbering 300 to 700), Ungava Bay (less than 100), and Baffin Island (400) populations of the beluga became endangered due to whaling, habitat destruction, and over-exploitation.

Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*) — This bird of the quail family is commonly found in the eastern and central United States, but its Canadian population, located in Southern Ontario, has been in decline since the 1830's. The bobwhite now numbers between two and four hundred.

Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) — The eastern population of the wolverine was declared endangered in 1989 after the last sighting occurred in Quebec in 1982. The western wolverine is currently classified as vulnerable.

Sources for more information on Canada's threatened and endangered wildlife:

Environment Canada's Endangered Species in Canada website: www.cwssc.ec.gc.ca/es/endon_e.html

COSEWIC website: www.cose-wic.gc.ca

IFAW: www.ifaw.org

Virtual Landscapes

Holly King blurs the lines of reality

BY JULIA APOSTLE

Holly King: Landscapes of the Imagination represents an opportunity for Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts to kill three birds with one stone: supporting Canadian art, supporting female artists (a conscious policy decision), and making a contribution to Montreal's "Mois de la photo."

Without a doubt, King approaches photography from a unique perspective. Originally a student of studio art at Dawson

scape but not of it." Therefore, the little bits of styrofoam chips that appear in one photograph, which are perhaps supposed to be white-caps on waves, are also supposed to be seen for what they are: styrofoam. However, the end result is unconvincing, since it serves as a reminder that what we are viewing is actually a constructed reality, something of an inhibitor, if not a total block, to the imaginative process. Happily, only a few photographs contain proof of the arts and crafts at work.



The Stillness of Absence, 1997: The MMEA's latest purchase.

College and Laval University, she has incorporated that training into her photographic practice; she has taken herself off the stage but has left the set intact. Her photographs consist of artificial landscapes built and painted by King herself. The photos are constructed in such a way, "so that the notion of believability comes into play so that there's an entry point into these photographs for the spectator."

The early landscapes, titled The Waters (1985), Hades: The Rivers (1986), and The Realms of Night (1986) were inspired by mythology with carefully selected components representing the four elements: air, earth, water and fire. One particularly evocative photograph, Lighthouse with Furies (1986), depicts a lighthouse surrounded by a raging sea with what seem to be lightning flashes crossing the sky. The effect is remarkable, especially considering that the models are all handmade miniatures blown-up to a life-like scale. In this respect, the size of the photographs is quite important, approximately 1.5m by 2m, as it adds to the intensity of the scenes presented.

The Gardens cycle (1990-1992) consists of a series of photographs taken from the perspective of someone in nature, perhaps walking through a forest. These particular works are extremely realistic; it is quite difficult to tell that in King's studio, the 'trees' are probably about a foot or so high. The exception to this realism is in the lighting used. In the Floating Screen (1991), a tree trunk is lit on one side by turquoise/electric blue light, and on the other by a hot pink light. The effect is quite magical, sort of reminiscent of the mood and the colors used in the fairy paintings from the Victorian era. The unrealistic elements are quite intentional on the part of the artist, who is "interested in the way in which we cannot claim that experience, even while standing in the midst of a marvelous site. There is always a sense of distancing in that we are in the land-

King's most recent works combine elements from the earlier pieces and can be seen as both matured works and experiments in new techniques. The simplicity is in their effect; they are quite striking in their use of colour to create a definite mood. They are complicated in that there is more going on - more foliage, more water, rocks, leaves, etc., and more realistic than some of the earlier works (plus, no styrofoam chips in evidence). In fact, they kind of bring to mind paintings by the Group of Seven, both in their subject matter, nature, and in their idealization of the subject matter.

On the whole, the exhibition is, for lack of a better word, cool. Making miniature landscapes life-sized, and making these landscapes powerful and mythical is a novel idea. However, the effect quickly becomes stale. And while the effect is probably helped by the element of uncertainty in deciding whether the landscapes are real or constructed, it didn't help to know that the artist's 8-year old daughter helped her paint the islands in several works. But it's a question of taste: some people like to hear about the art directly from the artist, others prefer to arrive at their own conclusions and not having them pre-determined. Ultimately, King wishes "that you will bring your own memories, your thoughts on landscapes, and the notion of place and meaning to these works." The show merits a visit not only because the work is interesting, but also because the artist is Canadian, because it is part of "Mois de la photo," and because admission is free. You can also meet Holly King there on October 20 and 27.

Holly King runs until December 5 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion 1380 Sherbrooke St. West, Tuesday to Sunday, 11a.m. to 6 p.m.



Montagnais children rally to "Protect the Beaver"

protect endangered species, and we really stick out like a sore thumb these days," said IFAW Campaigner Troy Seidle.

Both Seidle and Smith would like to see the terms of the National Accord fulfilled. The fourteen-point plan calls for the establishment of complementary legislation and programs for species at risk throughout Canada. While simple on paper, the provincial governments - which have jurisdiction over ninety-five percent of Canada's wildlife - have opposed any federal attempt to infringe on their autonomy.

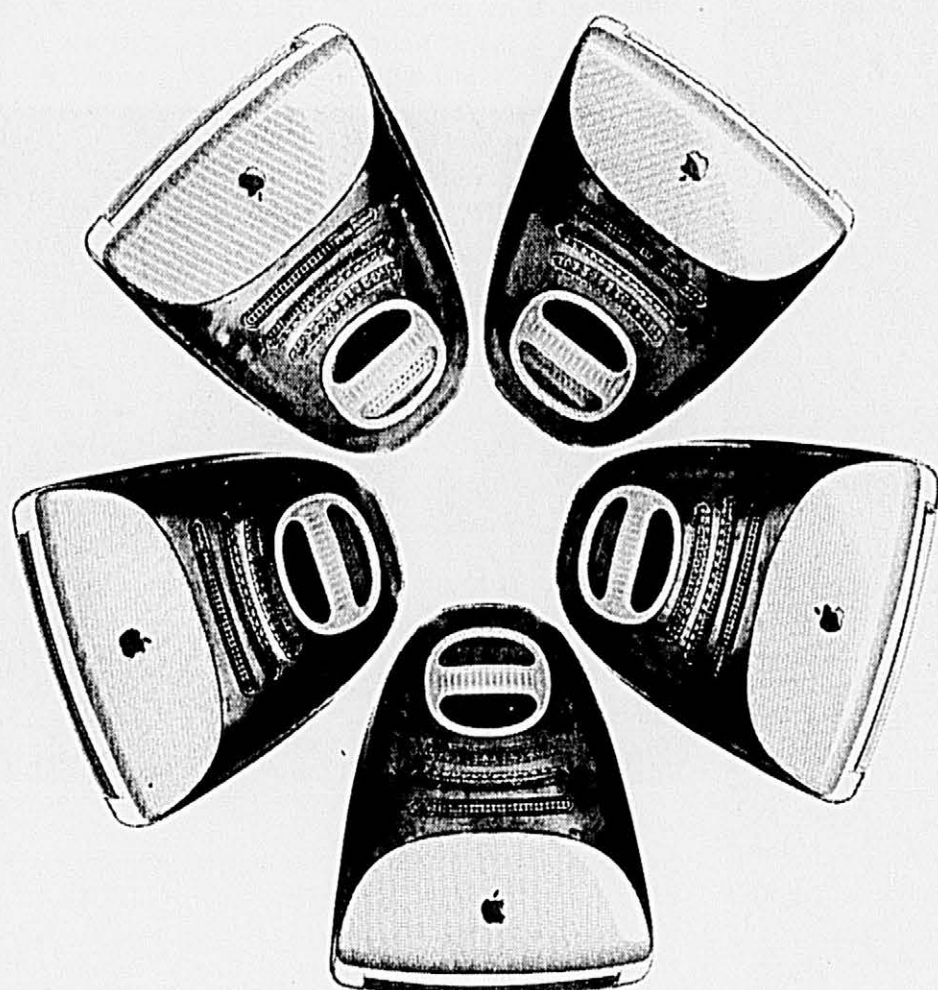
But without a comprehensive federal law, provinces could continue to ignore the Accord, the legal obligations of which are unclear, says Seidle.

Smith points to the Québec government as an example of the intransigence that is possible in the absence of federal laws.

...endnotes...endnotes ...endnotes

A weekly forum of views on the news

Mondays in the *THE MCGILL DAILY*



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- E) all of the above.

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Computer Cheat Check to Become University Policy

*Program detects multiple-choice
copiers*

BY BEN ERRETT

Multiple-choice exams will be analyzed for trends in students' answers, the Senate decided last Wednesday. Instructors will use a program created over a decade ago by Chemistry Chair David Harpp and Professor J. J. Hogan.

Chemistry Professor Patrick Farrell put forward the motion to allow the software's use. The most contentious part was the proposed manner in which students will be notified about the policy: the information will be included in the course calendar, and may be announced by invigilators, but it will not have to be on exam cover pages.

Arts Senator Jeff Feiner spoke against the motion. He was in the minority that voted against it.

"I'm not against the use of the program per se." It's already used in some departments, he reasoned. "I just don't like the precedent of announcing important things in this way," he said, noting that the calendar is so obscure that the Student Affairs Office often has difficulty decoding it.

A more spirited opponent was Mathematics Professor Wilbur Jonnson, who moved that notification be given on exam covers. But this proved controversial since a professor forgetting to include the information could arguably forfeit the right to use the software.

Jonnson also worried about the potential case of a false positive.

"Will innocent students be interrogated because they happen to match other students?" he asked.

Reached after the meeting, Professor Harpp explained that the chance of a false positive is statistically tiny.

"One always worries about false positives...This is a reasonable thing to worry about. Professor Jonnson probably doesn't know the evidence we have to back this up. [We] worried a great deal about false positives when we designed the program...I would guarantee you 99.8% that if you saw

the data that I could show you, you wouldn't have any doubts when you walked out."

Harpp is far more concerned about having exams in crowded lecture halls without any attempt at assigning seats in a random order.

"The facts are that in an exam room with no assigned seats, there will be five to eight percent of students that will cheat...With no chance of seeing where people sat, it would be difficult to pin anything down. It's when we use assigned seating that the program shows the proof very well."

When assigned seating is used, the program's findings are supported by the proximity between cheaters.

"In cases where the students are not sitting near each other, the evidence very rarely implicates anyone. In the one memorable case that it did, one of two students stowed a calculator with the answers on it in the washroom. The other picked it up, brought it back, and copied most of the answers. By the time we did the analysis, those two showed up like a red beacon compared to everyone else."

As in the case of the DNA tests at the O.J. Simpson trial, the argument can always be made that anything short of certainty leaves a window of doubt. This window is so small, Harpp says, that it's more likely cheaters will be missed than innocent students accused.

"There's always a grey zone, but the line has been pushed to the side of flagrant rather than questionable. I don't think there's a chance of such a situation."

Harpp notes that the objective of the program is one that students and teachers agree upon - a fair exam situation.

"We're just trying to bare the teeth of the lion. I don't like the idea of scaring the hell out of students, but I want them to know we're trying to give them a fair playing field. I think students have the right to a fair and reasonable exam period, and that's what we're trying to do."

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McGill Daily

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Grabbing a Piece of the Pie

Exploring the American psyche in American Beauty

BY JONAH GINDIN

“One of the movie’s themes...” says American Beauty’s screenwriter/co-producer Allan Ball in reference to the title’s ambiguity “...is how we have preconceived notions about things, but the truth often turns out to be something we never even considered- where you find true beauty might be the place you

However, in a twisted, jarringly inarticulate sort of way he’s right. Ball’s idea is that true beauty springs from life’s worst tragedies. In one scene Ricki Fitts (Wes Bentley - Beloved) the camcorder-toting, ex-mental patient explains why he filmed a homeless woman who had frozen to death, simply by saying “It was

for the younger generation.

In keeping with its philosophy, the most beautiful, truest moments of the film occur immediately after or during its darkest ones. The viewer goes through a myriad of emotions in a creepy, detached, merry-go-round (as Kevin Nielen, the Zen golfer from Happy Gilmore would say “up, down, and around...up, down, and around.”)

The adventure begins in small town America where Lester Burnham, played to perfection by Kevin Spacey (Usual Suspects), a failure at life in every respect and reviled and resented by his wife and daughter, is suddenly reborn.

This miraculous transformation is doomed from the start - Lester foreshadows “In less than a year I’ll be dead. In a way I’m dead already.” The catalyst is Lester’s pedophile obsession with his daughter Jane’s (Thora Birch - Doogie Howser, M.D.) cheerleading friend Angela, played by Mena Suvari (American Pie), who he first sees in a cheerleading episode choreographed by Paula Abdul. Angela is the physical representation of America. She is beautiful on the outside in a stereotypical, blond-blue-eyed, cheerleading kind of way. Inside she is lost; confused and desperately clinging on to what she thinks she wants in life by an unfulfilling string of lies.

Through his incongruous attraction to Angela, Lester begins to regain the

youthful carefree attitude that was so effectively smothered out of him over the last twenty years. When Lester’s wife Carolyn, (Annette Bening- Bugsy) catches

McBeal type, animated dream sequences, a beautiful, and ominously disturbing rose theme, and three distinct types of camera work which maximize the power of the

“One of the most politically insightful, provocative, and intellectually frightening films since Citizen Kane.”



Annette Bening taking it out on Kevin Spacey

least expect it.”

Upon further interrogation, Ball admitted to having watched The Wizard of Oz (“happiness is never farther than your own back yard”) immediately prior to coughing up the previous cliché quote.

beautiful.” He is something of a poetic messiah, the only person in the film who sees beauty all around him, even if it is only the potential for beauty. Though the older generation is undoubtedly lost, he and his love Jane represent a small hope

him masturbating one night, he explodes in an orgasm of resentment and disgust over the pathetic state of their marriage. The following day he quits his job, getting an impressive severance package by blackmailing his boss, saying “I’m just an ordinary guy with nothing to lose” to which he is replied later on in the movie, “I don’t think you’d fit in here.”

The surreal cinematography of Conrad Hall (Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid) combined with Thomas Newman’s bizarre, jarring soundtrack vividly reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick’s Eyes Wide Shut, and Tom Gillian’s 12 Monkeys create the uneasy atmosphere appropriate to a revelation of the decomposition of American beauty and of the American family. Ally

visual narrative are some of the products of American Beauty’s prodigious talent.

The movie ends with Lester Burnham narrating omnisciently as he did in the beginning of the movie, trying to express the beauty that arose from the tragedy of his life. What Ricki saw in the frozen homeless woman, he also saw in Lester; hope, even if it was extinguished long ago. Lester was happy and free, though it was too late for his generation. For Ricki and Jane and even Angela, the younger generation, there is still some hope. As Lester says, “There’s so much beauty in the world that sometimes I feel like my heart is going to balloon until it bursts, until I remember I just have to let go and let it flow through me.”

Not Deep Enough

Cool J and Epps play off stereotypes

BY J. KELLY NESTRUCK

Before going into the theatre to watch In Too Deep, I had the headline of the review all worked out. “None Too Deep” the headline would blare. I had heard the plot synopsis and was not particularly impressed by the poster which has Omar Epps and LL Cool J’s heads hanging like testicles on either side of a phallic gun. It was all so cliché that I was jotting down an outline of what to write during the coming attractions.

Alas, life is never that easy. The movie surprised me with its intelligence, the first gangster and police movie to do that in a long time, and the headline and outline were thrown out. It wasn’t a masterpiece mind you, but it had a story, good acting and even character development- something not common to action movies.

Truthfully, it was the pool cue enema scene that sold it to me.

In Too Deep’s story is a familiar one. It is about a Cincinnati undercover cop Jeffrey Cole (Omar Epps) who infiltrates an inner-city drug gang. The gang’s leader is a narcissistic crimelord who insists on being called “God” by all his lackeys. The further Cole gets into the gang, the more he begins to resemble those he is trying to get off the streets. Does this sound familiar? It’s also

the story of a zillion other movies, the best recent one being Donny Brasco.

Omar Epps (Higher Learning, The Mod Squad) plays Cole, our fearless protagonist. Cole grew up in “the projects” and is obsessed with getting crack dealers off the streets. Epps played an undercover cop in last year’s The Mod Squad and the practice paid off. Epps succeeds in making the audience empathize with his character, no small feat with all his ups and downs. LL Cool J (Deep Blue Sea, a defunct rap career) is also solid as God. He sheds his good guy image to take on the part of a downright mean sadist. Sure, God may bring Ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds to his area during Thanksgiving for the local kids, but he has no qualms about strapping his best friend down to a pool table and giving him a pool cue enema.

The best performance in the movie however, goes to Stanley Tucci (Big Night, A Midsummer Night’s Dream), who is fabulous as Preston D’Ambrosio, Cole’s superior officer. Tucci, who has previously only been seen in comedic roles, takes on the role of Cole’s fatherly mentor with an erudite intelligence, but not without personality. If In Too Deep were a cartoon, D’Ambrosio would appear as an angel above Cole’s right shoulder telling him to

be careful and to look both ways before crossing the street.

During the opening titles, we find out that the movie we are about to see is based on a true story. This may account for the fact that the characters seem real. This is not a good guy/bad guy movie typical of the genre. The movie explores Cole’s moral ambiguity as he gets deeper and deeper into God’s operation. Under the pseudonym of Jerry (pronounced “JEH-REE”, kind of like the way they shout it on Jerry Springer), Cole makes friends within the gang with whom he becomes very close. The film enjoys exploring the guilt that Cole feels every time he has to betray his “friends.” Eventually Cole is in so deep (hence the title) that he has difficulty separating Jerry from himself.

The big surprise of In Too Deep is that there is an aftermath to the story. Unlike most Hollywood movies which end shortly after the big showdown between good and evil, this movie slowly winds down and shows big, tough Cole going to support groups and returning to normal life on the outside. An action movie where the hero cries? This is hardly Hollywood stuff.

However, In Too Deep is not without its flaws. The romance that blooms between



Cole and a young dancer (Nia Long from Soul Food) he met while taking an imposed break from undercover work, seemed forced. It seemed as if the sex scene was thrown in just to spice up the previews and attract those that don’t go see a movie unless there’s a naked woman in it.

The biggest flaw though is the structure of the story. The suspense is killed by the fact that the whole movie is told in a flashback. No director seems able to make a linear film anymore. Whether or not it’s a foregone conclusion, there are certain movies where you just don’t want to know for sure that the good guy is going to be fine at the end.

In Too Deep is a fun, exciting movie that doesn’t mind throwing in a little food for thought on the theme of betrayal. It’s a solid movie and if nothing else, it succeeded in teaching me not to judge a book by its cover, or a movie by its posters.

Carving out a Niche

Gay and Lesbian Film Fest casts wide net

BY JENNIFER FERNANDES

The Image & Nation: Montreal International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival is taking off into its twelfth year. Films featured hail from New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, Turkey, Sweden, Germany, Norway, and the U.K. Canadian films, including many francophone films are debuting this year along under the new theme of Cinema Francophone. The festival runs from Thursday, September 23 until Sunday, October 3.

For those who can’t get enough of the Eighties, Edge of Seventeen sounds sure to please. Set in 1984 in the dreary suburb of Sandusky, Ohio, Eric is just entering his senior year in high school. He and his quasi-girlfriend share a platonic relationship. Eric then meets Rod, a college boy from Ohio State whose only goal is to bed Eric. The young, impressionable Eric falls head over heels for Rod. Well, that just doesn’t fall right with the people in Eric’s life, and as he tries to enjoy his new sexual liberation, his isolation from friends and family increases.

The story of the oldest “out” black lesbian known is told in Living with Pride: Ruth Ellis @ 100. This one-hour documentary follows Ruth through one hundred years of provocative black and queer

(continued on page 16)

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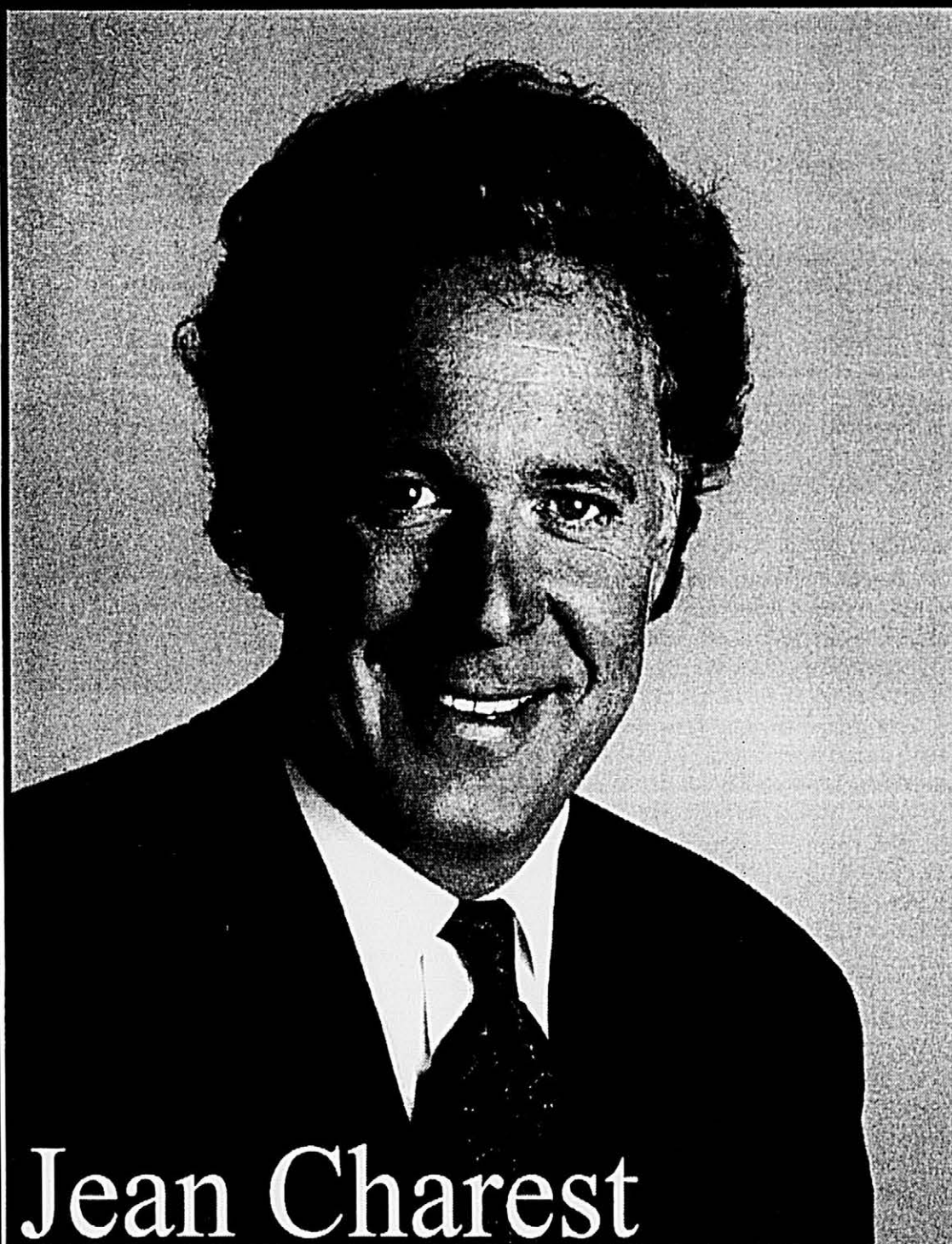
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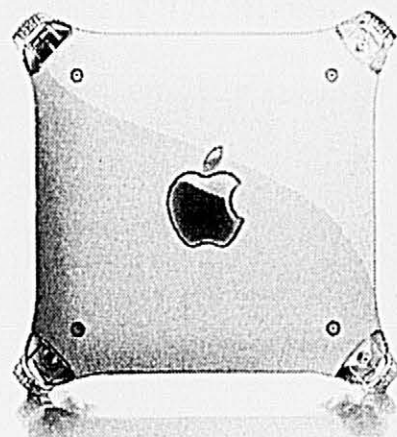
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The Bookshelf

A Blast From the Past

Dark humour novelist's specialty

THEN AGAIN

BY ELYSE FRIEDMAN

RANDOM HOUSE CANADA, 190 PAGES, \$29.95

Anyone who has given any thought to becoming a novelist has no doubt wondered if writer workshops are the key to being discovered. Although they probably don't do much for a mediocre writer, Elyse Friedman is proof that they can be the launching pad for a truly gifted author.

Friedman was a student at the Humber Writer's Workshop in Toronto when author Paul Quarrington discovered her novel *Then Again*. Her novel was the only one that he recommended to his agent in five years of teaching. Of course, this information provided in the novel's publicity package doesn't necessarily mean much more than one man's opinion. However, by the first two pages it becomes evident that Quarrington's judgment was dead on.

On page one, Friedman succinctly characterizes the eccentricity that money makes acceptable in her brother: "[Y]ou could hire the Rockettes to kick the crap out of your neighbour's prize winning roses. You could rent Disneyland for an evening and hand hundreds of your closest friends paint guns to fire at the hapless Mickeys and Goofys wandering about. You could throw a Japanese dinner party in which each place setting consists of an Asian virgin sitting cross-legged on the table with slices of sashimi glistening between her thighs." All of these feats have been performed by Joel, the protagonist's sickeningly rich screenwriter brother. Michelle Schafer is thus wary when she is invited from her Winnipeg home to "A Blast from the Past" party held at the North York home in which she and her siblings were raised.

Upon her arrival, she finds that the home has been restored to its mid 1970's state, right down to the actors playing the roles of her mother and father as they looked in the 70's. This premise is a perfect set-up for Friedman's sharply satiric writing. This was not a happy family and Michelle uses humour to escape the pain that living in this house entailed. Her father was a Holocaust survivor, and his emotional trauma manifested itself in the form of rage against his children. Her sister Maria is neurotic about her appearance and subject to wild mood swings. Joel's mental state is tenuous at best, and her mother's silent suffering ultimately took its toll on her health. All this sounds overwhelming, but Friedman doesn't throw it all at you at once. Like Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, *Then Again* manages to delve into sensitive territory without alienating the reader. Michelle had attempted suicide in her youth, but ultimately was taken away from the pain by Frank McCollum, a fellow patient in the psychiatric ward and an aspiring entomologist.

The two are the only characters in the novel that have certifiable psychological problems, and yet they are the most stable. This makes perfect sense in the reality Friedman portrays. Michelle's return to Toronto is interspersed with her life history, detailing how she and McCollum thrive together despite being outcasts when they were alone. She hits all the Toronto landmarks, from dinner at the House of Chan to walks through Mount Pleasant Cemetery. One does get the impression Friedman has been urged to put Michelle in Winnipeg so the novel would have some content outside of the 416 area code.

The dysfunctional household is an overused staple of 90's pop culture, and one that is easy to turn into melodrama. Friedman bypasses this by presenting the subject as darkly comic. The message is ultimately redeeming without being trite - the freaks triumph over the brain-dead world. Elyse Friedman's ability to render pathos as well as she does ought to earn her a designation as one of Canadian Lit's rising stars. - Ben Errett.

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my plan will come to fruition. I've had my eye on The Tish for a while now. I think he and I could hit it off, and I know I'd make a great senator. Plus, I'd be sure to get more Jelly Bellies. It's a win-win situation. Look for me soon representing you, worthless voters...

—Jaime Kirzner-Roberts

FOLLOWING THE MSF MODEL

In one of his increasingly frequent brainstormers, Montreal Mayor Pierre Bourque has renewed his push for a "one island, one city" amalgamated Montreal. Putting aside the linguistic

justifications for the present system, it would seem that this idea is intended to gain more clout in Quebec City. Montreal has been given short shrift by the Parti Quebecois, no doubt due to its lack of support for sovereignty. Since the province won't pay for its largest city as is, perhaps Bourque should take a page from the SSMU. Start a Montreal Citizens' Fund; all Montrealers could pay the money needed to repair the crumbling infrastructure and help our fellow Montrealers. People would justifiably be outraged. Why should they pay taxes and then a separate fee for what they thought they were originally

getting? But with a little bit of political will, Bourque could push it through. All our problems would be solved, at least until The Daily starts publicizing the opt-out period.

—Ben Errett

AN INADEQUATE SYSTEM

Last week's Manitoba election was typical of what plagues Canadian democracy. The NDP owned the northern, aboriginal part of the province and the North End of Winnipeg. The Tories owned the southern half of the province and affluent southern

Winnipeg. The whole election was fought in the few swing ridings left over. How is this democracy? Essentially, your vote depends on where you live. It's the same reason the Liberals lost in Quebec even though they won a larger share of the popular vote. Voters living in party strongholds might as well stay home. Obviously, no political party that makes it to power will ever challenge the system that put it there. Clearly, some sort of proportional representation blended with our parliamentary system to ensure that winners don't sit in opposition and vote power doesn't depend on residence is needed.

—Ben Errett

The Profundity of a Balloon

Looking at balloons and stone carved words at the Musee d'Art Contemporain

BY SARAH COHEN

The above are the ingredients that comprise Inacheve et rien d'heroique (Unfinished and nothing heroic), Gilbert Boyer's exhibition that will continue until November 7th at the Musee d'Art Contemporain de Montreal. The plastic and colored balloons floating throughout the gallery space evoke movement and a certain degree of playfulness. Yet the bulky marble of the monuments is firmly rooted in the earth, immobile. This opposition is played out again, in that the words Boyer has chosen are etched in the stone, definitively, whereas scaffoldings are temporary and fleeting, for they don't survive after the culmination of an installation.

This Quebecois artist decided to combine the ephemeral and eternal by carving words on stones and distributing them in the space. This is what he named "Inacheve et rien d'heroique".

The exhibition is thus an interesting

series of carved plaques, reminiscent of headstones. But behind such a serious and philosophical title and the supposed severity of a cemetery, the words chosen and etched by the artist are simple ones. Once again, he incorporated the serious into the frivolous, and thereby he seeks to immortalize the insignificant. "I want to make fun of this assumed permanence of monuments" confided the artist introducing his work, "the plaques refer to everyday life, this explains the 'rien d'heroique' in the title".

Then, in order to discover and enter the artist's work, one has to walk among the scaffoldings and turn around the marble stones to try to read the sentences carved around the plaques. This gives the viewer a chance to interact with the sculptures of the exhibition, and become a part of the artist's opus. By this, the visitor is kept on her toes guessing what is inscribed on the

stones. She has to crouch down or stand on tiptoe, wring her neck, turn her head or screw up her eyes and finally, she manages to discover things like: "JE NE SAIS PAS," "ai pense a tout ca, PENSE," or "a dust of seeds upon your tongue." The participation in the artwork is like a game in which the artist wants his spectator to be implied.

Only fragments are etched in the plaques. The sentences are hardly ever whole, separated from their beginning, their end or their subject - and bring to mind the title of the exhibit, Inacheve. Robert Boyer used different scripts and various sizes of italic or capital letters. He also wrote in four different languages, French, English, Greek and Hebrew, because, as he explained, "We can express different things with other languages."

What do these disjointed phrases mean? Primarily, they are fragments of languages, writings, conversations and

thoughts that stayed in the artist's mind. He selected them from among the letters he wrote or received, and from borrowed passages of texts he likes, and which he "would have liked to have written." Sometimes they are only bits of conversation he picked up while eavesdropping in cafes. You can even find cooking receipts or Greek songs, among this wide array of text.

The exhibition is therefore like a ballad. At first glance, you feel as if you were entering a cemetery, one that is under construction. You walk between the tombstone-like sculptures in silence. However, you discover words but not names, lightness but not a dreary atmosphere. Sometimes, the words can stir up memories and appeal to everyone's imagination, because what is written there is the poetry of everyday life that we generally overlook. Hence, there is a lot of personal reflection

derived from these words. The artist is wondering about himself, as we can guess reading "NE L'AI-JE PAS ETE TROP LONGTEMPS?" or "comment fait on pour avancer dans la nuit quand il fait si noir" (How can we go on in the night when it is so dark). Through this he shares his impressions of life with the viewer.

Gilbert Boyer is fascinated by words. By carving them, he aims to underscore the fragmented and ephemeral nature of speech. He chooses to etch ordinary and trivial sentences, and suddenly they become more meaningful. That is what is fascinating about this exhibition. You walk among balloons and stones, between futility and solemnity, and it is therefore up to you to sort through the different elements. In a way, the "unfinished" character of the work gives you the freedom of looking at it with a personal perspective, which is fun, interactive, and unusual.

Blinker the Man

Zadorozny comes home

BY JOSHUA BEITEL

Jordon Zadorozny is Blinker the Star.

He writes the songs, he sings the songs, he does the interviews. And when I arrived for our interview at the Cabaret, just hours before he and his band were to take the stage, he was finishing up with MusiquePlus, seeming quite at ease with the camera in his face.

Zadorozny grew up in Pembroke, Ontario, where his parents, both musicians, owned and operated a music store. "My parents didn't get babysitters for me, I would just hang out at the store. When I was old enough, they would close the store down and I would just play and record on a portable machine. It was ideal for anyone interested in music to have that luxury."

After moving to Montréal to study

English at Concordia, he was quickly recruited by the band Tinker, which included Melissa Auf der Maur on bass.

"Tinker was a far more democratic process than what Blinker the Star is, which is, basically, I'm the benevolent dictator. But I learned a lot being in that band, I learned how to be in a proper band...I learned to have a little more patience."

However, taking two weeks to write a song wasn't his preferred mode. "[Now] I stay quiet for a long time and then just burst out for a couple months" Zadorozny said.

His outbursts are certainly a lot more sophisticated musically now than in the days of Tinker. Eight of the twelve songs on the new album (August Everywhere) feature violin, viola, and cello, giving

the recording a considerably melancholy feel, and making it somewhat difficult to warm up to. In concert, Blinker the Star has a much more traditional rock and roll setup, with keyboard, two guitars, bass, and drums. It wasn't surprising, then, that they ended up rocking harder onstage than on the album. "It's not desirable for us to go out there and do it exactly the way it is, like Frankie Goes to Hollywood might do," explained Zadorozny. "That's a different form of entertainment. It's almost a different medium to me. We definitely bring a new spirit to it live. It's probably a bit more aggressive."

August Everywhere is Blinker's first for DreamWorks. While recorded with A&M, it

was then picked up by Spielberg's label, which had always been "quietly interested."

"I had always been attracted to DreamWorks," said Zadorozny, "I always liked them...They really know what they're doing, they know how to sell records, but...they want to sell records that they like personally, so they're very selective, which is good. I'm all for it."

Despite his new life in L.A., Zadorozny loves to come back to Montréal. "We still feel a pretty deep kinship here. I would have no problem being considered a Montréal band. I would actually prefer it to being considered an L.A. band...I got pissed off the other day cause I read a review that called us a Toronto band, in Rolling Stone, and I was like 'Anything but that.'"

The single off the album, "Below The Sliding Doors", has been receiving airplay in Los Angeles and other American cities, with the video is currently in rotation on MuchMusic. However, in a continued demonstration of the uselessness of Montréal area radio stations, no station has picked it up despite the fact that the Buzz played the single from their last album three years ago.

So it remains to be seen whether Blinker the Star will take off the same way labelmate Rufus Wainwright did last year with even fewer hooks on Blinker's album. Though the songwriting and arranging is mature and refined, Blinker shines brightly live, where they're still good and rough around the edges.

daily classifieds

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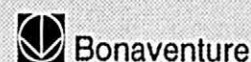
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USSR: LIFE FROM THE
OTHER SIDE
DJ VADIM
(NINJATUNES)

Side-tracked from professional sports by an elbow injury at seventeen, Andre Gurov traded tennis for turntables as DJ Vadim. In his second LP with the Ninjatunes label, *USSR: Life From the Other Side*, he continues his voyage into the wackier side of the hip-hop underground. A long list of guest stars gives the disk's twenty-five tracks a variety show atmosphere.



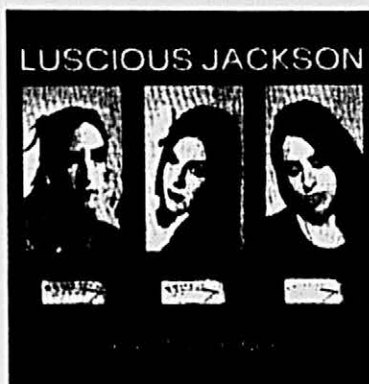
The best tracks come from: Skinnyman, Blu Rum 13 (also part of Montreal funk band Bullfrog along side Kid Koala) and Sarah Jones. Clever, quick rhymes, smooth presentation, and real content (not simple egoflexing) confirm the rapademic standing of all three. Indistinct and inarticulate,

only Vadim's dexterous scratching holds together weaker work by Blade and Motion Man. Vadim's sample-laden solo tracks, run from basic language skills and stereo instructions, all the way to conversational Russian. Simple beats and intricate surface noise fill in all the blanks.

Russian born and London bred, Vadim quotes both Lenin and the Bible in his liner notes. His music doesn't live up to these lofty standards — but it does score another point against the horrible homogeneity of mainstream music. Despite a few low-caliber collaborations, and some choppiness between tracks, the album is funky, funny and entertaining. Vadim's eclectic ear and quick fingers are a pleasure to hear. A November tour is scheduled to promote the album, stay tuned for details. — Alex Aylett.

ELECTRIC HONEY
LUSCIOUS JACKSON (VIRGIN/EMI)

The title should have immediately tipped me off to the fact that Luscious Jackson have decided to jump onto the pseudo-electronica bandwagon along with everybody else. Unfortunately, they have produced a work that is hanging on for its dear life. Luscious Jackson's fourth album, *Electric Honey*, is dripping with overdone programming and sampling, clashing with the band's dance-pop-driven vocals and guitar riffs. The album is a disappointing and an almost painful experience, bringing



the listener on a journey through many contrasting styles, ranging from space-funk to 60's-style dance-pop, with some folk-rock disasters thrown in. It's sprinkled with vapid, simplistic lyrics penned mostly by Jill Cuniff. Even with her clear vocals are the only good thing on the album, she (along with guest vocalists Emmylou Harris and Deborah Harry) cannot spruce up this strange foray into musical experimentation. All vocal contributions are either lost under sampler effects, droning drum-beats and lyrics that leave an empty feeling, like there's nothing good on late-night television, or are floating in sparse, trendily under-produced sound. Highlights among the incoherent lyrical selections were, "I'm an underwater fraulein/All I know is my rhyme" and, "There's dirt in my eye/I hear the country calling me."

Unless you are a diehard fan, or are looking for an album that runs the gamut of musical genres poorly, you should probably seek out a jar of honey that does not make you want to electrocute yourself in it. — Holly Gauthier-Frankel.

(continued from page 11)

history. Ruth and her partner Babe were at ground zero in Detroit during the 40's, 50's, and 60's when blacks were discriminated against in the bar scene. Director Yvonne Welbon uses photographs, archival footage, and the theatre troupe 'A Real Read' to present Ruth Ellis' life.

Del Otro Lado (The Other Side) is a film about a gay couple living with AIDS in Mexico. The story centers around Alejandro and Beto, partners in a very stable and loving relationship. Alejandro is living with AIDS and cannot find the life saving medication he needs in Mexico. His futile attempts to obtain a visa to the United States lead him to a dead end. The movie centers around Alejandro's dilemma; to wait for better medical attention or to cross the border illegally and seek aid.

Queer as Folk, is a drama series that ran as a television show in the U.K. from February to April of 1999. The story follows three gay men in Manchester, who spend their nights on the main gay strip. Vince is 29, a shy manager of a supermarket. His best friend is Stuart (who he happens to be in love with). The third member of the trio is Nathan, a young 15 year old that Stuart beds with abandon. The show was well received in the U.K. with a healthy dose of complaints about the explicit sexual content.

TV Did This to Me, is a series of short films including *Bondage TV* and *Dick Delong*. However, perhaps the highlight of the festival, is the much-anticipated *Sex...Girl Style*, which includes such short films as *How to Fake an Orgasm*, *Sunday Sundae*, *Pussy*

Prowler, and *Sex Flesh in Blood*.

For more information check out Image & Nation's website at www.image-nation.org, or call their info-line at (514) 285-4467. All films for the queer festival will be screened at Le Parisien theatre (480 St-Catherine West). General price for most movies is \$7.75 and for students with cards \$6. *Edge of Seventeen* plays October 1 at 9:40pm and the following at 1:30pm in *Living with Pride*: Ruth Ellis @ 100 plays October 1 at 5:45pm (Spanish with subti-



les), *Queer as Folk* screens October 3 at 1:00pm, it's a five hour show and admission is \$15. *TV Did This to Me* screens on September 27 at 7:30pm. *Sex...Girl Style* plays on September 30 at 9:30pm.

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